

Appendix 1

Address by President George W. Bush

Statement by President George W. Bush before the 63rd regular session of the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2008.

President Bush: I am pleased to be here to address the General Assembly. Sixty-three years ago representatives from around the world gathered in San Francisco to complete the founding of the Charter of the United Nations. They met in the shadow of a devastating war with grave new dangers on the horizon. They agreed on a historic pledge to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and unite their strength to maintain international peace and security. That noble pledge has endured trying hours in United Nations history, and it still guides our work today.

Yet the ideals of the charter are now facing a challenge as serious as any since the United Nations' founding: a global movement of violent extremists. By deliberately murdering the innocent to advance their aims, those extremists defy the fundamental principles of international order. They show contempt for all who respect life and value human dignity. They reject the words of the Bible, the Koran, the Torah, or any standard of conscience of morality. They imperil the values of justice and human rights that gave birth to the United Nations — values that have fuelled an unprecedented expansion of freedom across the world.

To uphold the words of the charter in the face of this challenge every nation in this hall has responsibilities. As sovereign states we have an obligation to govern responsibly and solve problems before they spill across borders. We have an obligation to prevent our territory from being used as a sanctuary for terrorism, proliferation, human trafficking, and organized crime. We have an obligation to respect the rights and respond to the needs of our people.

Multilateral organizations have responsibilities. For eight years the nations in this assembly have worked together to confront the extremist threat. We have witnessed successes and setbacks, and through it all a clear lesson has emerged. The United Nations and other multilateral organizations are needed more urgently than ever. To be successful we must be focused, resolute, and effective.

Instead of only adopting resolutions decrying terrorist acts after they occur, we must cooperate more closely to keep terrorist attacks from happening in the first place. Instead of treating all forms of government as equally tolerable, we must actively challenge the conditions of tyranny and despair that allow terror and extremists to thrive. By acting together to meet the fundamental challenge of our time, we can lead toward a world that is more secure, more prosperous, and more hopeful.

In the decades ahead, the United Nations and other multilateral organizations must continually confront terror. That mission requires clarity of vision. We must see the terrorists for what they are: ruthless extremists who exploit the desperate, subvert the tenets of a great religion, and seek to

impose their will on as many people as possible. Some suggest that those men would pose less of a threat if we would only leave them alone, yet their leaders make clear that no concession could ever satisfy their ambitions. Bringing the terrorists to justice does not create terrorism. It is the best way to protect our people.

Multilateral organizations must respond by taking an unequivocal moral stand against terrorism. No cause can justify the deliberate taking of innocent life, and the international community is nearing universal agreement on this truth. The vast majority of nations in this assembly now agree that tactics like suicide bombing, hostage-taking, and hijacking are never legitimate. The Security Council has adopted resolutions declaring terror unlawful and requiring all nations to crack down on terrorist financing. Earlier this month the Secretary-General held a conference to highlight victims of terror, where he stated that terrorism can never be justified.

Other multilateral organizations have spoken clearly as well. The Group of Eight has declared that all terrorist acts are criminal and must be universally condemned. The Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference recently spoke out against suicide bombing, which he said runs counter to the teachings of Islam.

The message behind those statements is resolutely clear. Like slavery and piracy, terrorism has no place in the modern world. Around the globe nations are turning those words into action. Members of the United Nations are sharing intelligence with one another, conducting joint operations, and freezing terrorists' finances. While terrorists continue to carry out attacks like the terrible bombing in Islamabad last week, our joint actions have spared our citizens from many devastating blows.

The brutal nature of the extremists is increasingly clear and the coalition of nations confronting terrorists is growing stronger. Over the past seven years, Afghanistan and Iraq have been transformed from regimes that actively sponsor terror to democracies that fight terror. Libya has renounced its support for terror and its pursuit of nuclear weapons. Nations like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are actively pursuing the terrorists. A few nations, regimes like Syria and Iran, continue to sponsor terror, yet their numbers are growing fewer and they are growing more isolated from the world.

As the 21st century unfolds, some may be tempted to assume that the threat has receded. That would be comforting; it would be wrong. The terrorists believe time is on their side, so they have made waiting out civilized nations part of their strategy. We must not allow them to succeed. The nations of this body must stand united in the fight against terror. We must continue working to deny the terrorists refuge anywhere in the world, including ungoverned spaces. We must remain vigilant against proliferation by fully implementing the terms of [Security Council] Resolution 1540 (2004) and enforcing sanctions against North Korea and Iran. We must not relent until our people are safe from this threat to civilization.

To uphold the Charter's promise of peace and security in the 21st century, we must also confront the ideology of the terrorists. At its core the

struggle against extremists is a battle of ideas. Terrorists envision a world in which religious freedom is denied, women are oppressed, and all dissent is crushed. The nations represented in this hall must present a more hopeful alternative — a vision where people can speak freely, worship as they choose, and pursue their dreams in liberty.

Advancing this vision of freedom serves our highest ideals, as expressed in the United Nations Charter's commitment to the dignity and worth of the human person. Advancing this vision also serves our security interests. History shows that when citizens have a voice in choosing their own leaders, they are less likely to search for meaning in radical ideologies, and when governments respect the rights of their people, they are more likely to respect the rights of their neighbors.

For all these reasons, the nations of this body must challenge tyranny as vigorously as we challenge terror. Some question whether people in certain parts of the world actually desire freedom. This self-serving condescension has been disproved before our eyes. From the voting booths of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Liberia to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, we have seen people consistently make the courageous decision to demand their liberty.

For all the suggestions to the contrary, the truth is that whenever and wherever people are given the choice, they choose freedom. Nations represented in this hall have supported the efforts of dissidents, reformers, and civil-society advocates in newly free societies through the new United Nations Democracy Fund, and we appreciate those efforts. As young democracies around the world continue to make brave stands for liberty, multilateral organizations like the United Nations must continue to stand with them.

In Afghanistan a determined people are working to overcome decades of tyranny and protect their newly free society. They have strong support from all 26 nations of the NATO alliance. I appreciate the United Nations decision this week to renew the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. The United Nations also has an active civilian presence in Afghanistan, where experts are doing important work helping to improve education, facilitate humanitarian aid, and protect human rights. We must continue to help the Afghan people defend their young democracy so that the Taliban does not return to power and Afghanistan is never again a safe haven for terror.

In Iraq the fight has been difficult, yet daily life has improved dramatically over the past 20 months thanks to the courage of the Iraqi people, a determined coalition of nations, and a surge of American troops. The United Nations has provided the mandate for multinational forces in Iraq through this December, and the United Nations is carrying out an ambitious strategy to strengthen Iraq's democracy, including helping Iraqis prepare for their next round of free elections. Whatever disagreements our nations have had on Iraq, we should all welcome this progress toward stability and peace and we should stand united in helping Iraq's democracy succeed.

We must stand united in our support of other young democracies, from the people of Lebanon struggling to maintain their hard-won independence to the people of the Palestinian territories, who deserve a free and peaceful state of their own. We must stand united in our support of the people of Georgia. The United Nations Charter sets forth the equal rights of nations large and small; Russia's invasion of Georgia was a violation of those rights. Young democracies around the world are watching to see how we respond to this test. The United States has worked with allies in such multilateral institutions as the European Union and NATO to uphold Georgia's territorial integrity and provide humanitarian relief. Our nations will continue to support Georgia's democracy.

In this hall are representatives of Georgia, Ukraine, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Liberia, Iraq, and other brave young democracies. We admire their courage, we honor their sacrifices, and we thank them for their inspiring example. We will continue to stand with all who stand for freedom. This noble goal is worthy of the United Nations and it should have the support of every member of this assembly.

Extending the reach of political freedom is essential to prevailing in the great struggle of our time, but it is not enough. Many in this hall have answered the call to help their brothers and sisters in need by working to alleviate hopelessness. Those efforts to improve the human condition honor the highest ideals of this institution. They also advance our security interests. The extremists find their most fertile recruiting grounds in societies trapped in chaos and despair – places where people see no prospect of a better life. In the shadows of hopelessness radicalism thrives. Eventually that radicalism can boil over into violence, cross borders, and take innocent lives across the world.

Overcoming hopelessness requires addressing its causes: poverty, disease, and ignorance. Challenging these conditions is in the interest of every nation in this hall, and democracies are particularly well positioned to carry out that work because we have experience responding to the needs of our own people. We are natural partners in helping other nations respond to the needs of theirs. Together we must commit our resources and efforts to advancing education, health, and prosperity.

Over the years many nations have made well-intentioned efforts to promote these goals, but the success of these efforts must be measured by more than intentions. It must be measured by results. My nation is placing insistence on results at the heart of our foreign assistance programs. We launched a new initiative, called the Millennium Challenge Account, which directs our help to countries that demonstrate their ability to produce results by governing justly, fighting corruption, and pursuing market-based economic policies, as well as investing in their people. Every country and institution that provides foreign assistance, including the United Nations, will be more effective by showing faith in the people of the developing world and insisting on performance in return for aid.

Experience also shows that to be effective we must adopt a model of partnership, not paternalism. This approach is based on our conviction that

people in the developing world have the capacity to improve their own lives and will rise to meet high expectations if we set them. America sought to apply this model in our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Every nation that receives American support through this initiative develops its own plan for fighting HIV/AIDS and measures the results.

So far, these results are inspiring. Five years ago 50,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving treatment for HIV/AIDS; today that number is nearly 1.7 million. We are taking a similar approach to fighting malaria, and so far we have supported local efforts to protect more than 25 million Africans. Multilateral organizations have made bold commitments of their own to fight disease. The G-8 has pledged to match America's efforts on malaria and HIV/AIDS. Through the Global Fund many countries are working to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Lives in the developing world depend on these programs and all who have made pledges to fight disease have an obligation to follow through on their commitments.

One of the most powerful engines of development and prosperity are trade and investment, which create new opportunities for entrepreneurs, help people rise out of poverty, and reinforce such fundamental values as transparency and the rule of law. For all these reasons many represented in this hall have conducted free-trade agreements at the bilateral and regional levels.

The most effective step of all would be an agreement that tears down trade barriers at the global level. The recent impasse in the Doha round is disappointing, but that does not have to be the final word. I urge every nation to seize this opportunity to lift up economies around the world and reach a successful Doha agreement as soon as possible. Beyond Doha our nations must renew our commitment to open economies and stand firm against economic isolationism. These objectives are being tested by turbulence in the global financial markets.

Our economies are more closely connected than ever before, and I know that many of you here are watching how the United States Government will address the problems in our financial system. In recent weeks we have taken bold steps to prevent a severe disruption of the American economy, which would have a devastating effect on other economies around the world. We promote stability in the markets by preventing the disorderly failure of major companies. The Federal Reserve has injected urgently needed liquidity into the system. Last week I announced decisive action by the federal government to address the root cause of much of the instability in our financial markets by purchasing illiquid assets that are weighing down balance sheets and restricting the flow of credit. I can assure the Assembly that my administration and our Congress are working together to quickly pass legislation approving this strategy. And I am confident that we will act in the urgent time frame required.

The objectives I have laid out for multilateral institutions — confronting terror, opposing tyranny, and promoting effective development — are difficult but they are necessary tasks. To have maximum impact,

multilateral institutions must take on challenging missions, and like all of us in this hall they must work towards measurable goals, be accountable for their actions, and hold true to their word.

In the 21st century the world needs a competent and effective United Nations. This unique institution should build on its successes and improve its performance. Where there is inefficiency and corruption, that must be corrected. Where there are bloated bureaucracies, they must be streamlined. Where members fail to uphold their obligations, there must be strong action — for example, there should be an immediate review of the Human Rights Council, which has routinely protected violators of human rights. There should be a stronger effort to help the people of Burma live free of the repression they have suffered for too long. All nations, especially members of the Security Council, must act decisively to ensure that the Government of the Sudan upholds its commitment to address the violence in Darfur.

The United Nations is an organization of extraordinary potential. As it rebuilds its headquarters, it must also open the door to a new age of transparency, accountability, and seriousness of purpose. With determination and clear purpose, the United Nations can be a powerful force for good as we head into the 21st century. It can affirm the great promise of its founding.

In the final days of the San Francisco Conference, the delegates negotiating the United Nations Charter received a visit from President Harry Truman. He acknowledged the enormous challenges they faced and said that success was possible only because of what he called an unshakable unity of determination. Today the world is engaged in another period of great challenge, and by continuing to work together that unshakable unity of determination will be ours. Together we can confront and defeat the evil of terrorism. Together we can secure the Almighty's gift of liberty and justice to millions who have not known it. Together we can build a world that is freer, safer, and better for the generations who follow.